

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7, 10-17, 19-25, 27, 30-33, 35, and 38-40 are pending in the application. Claims 1-5, 7, 10-16, 19, 21-25, 27, 30-33, 35, and 38-40 are amended. Claims 6, 18, 26, and 34 are newly canceled. Support for the claim amendments can be found in the published specification, for example, in at least paragraphs [0041] to [0047] and Figs. 2A-2C, 5A-5C, 7A-7B, and 9A-9B.

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 10-27, 30-35, and 38-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by US Pat. No. 6,315,666 to Mastera et al. (“Mastera”). Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mastera.

35 U.S.C. §102(b) Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 10-27, 30-35, and 38-40

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 10-27, 30-35, and 38-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Mastera. Amended claim 1 recites:

A gaming machine adapted for accepting wagers and granting monetary awards, comprising:

a master gaming controller adapted to control game play and authorize payouts and other awards on said gaming machine, said master gaming controller located in a main cabinet of the gaming machine, **said main cabinet having a first communications interface having a first configuration or arrangement;**

a top box that contains a plurality of peripheral devices and a second communications interface having a second configuration or arrangement, the top box adapted to be removable from said gaming machine and interchangeable with other top boxes also so adapted; and

a modular universal gaming engine located outside said main cabinet and said top box, said modular universal gaming engine having at least one dedicated processing unit, at least one associated storage device, **a third communications interface adapted to connect with said first communications interface, and a fourth communications interface adapted to connect with said second communications interface,** wherein said modular universal gaming engine is adapted to control a substantial portion of said plurality of peripheral devices contained by said top box. (emphasis added).

The cited sections of Mastera describe a top box which features an internal display module that controls a secondary display housed within the top box. Embodiments of Applicants’ amended claim 1 are at least advantageous over the cited prior art in that they provide a modular universal gaming engine that is located outside of a gaming machine’s main cabinet and top box and which is adapted to control a substantial portion of a plurality of peripherals contained by the top box. Such embodiments allow for a top box to be exchanged for other top boxes without removal of the modular universal gaming engine.

The Cited Art Does Not Teach a Modular Universal Gaming Engine Located Outside the Main Cabinet and the Top Box

The Office Action states that Mastera discloses “...a universal gaming engine located outside the main cabinet (fig. 3e, display module 329, fig. 6, multislave module 508, video subsection 613)...” (Office Action, page 3, lines 1-2). Applicants respectfully submit that the cited sections of Mastera do not teach a modular universal gaming engine located outside the main cabinet **and** the top box.

The Office Action equates display module 329/multislave module 508/video subsection 613 to the [modular] universal gaming engine recited in Applicants’ claim 1. Fig. 3d of Mastera clearly indicates that the display module 329 is located within the top box 301. Applicants refer to Fig. 3d rather than Fig. 3e because Fig. 3d depicts display module 329 in a “display position” representative of the actual component location when the gaming machine is in use whereas Fig. 3e depicts display module 329 in an interim maintenance-access position. Thus, while display module 329 is located outside of the main cabinet of the gaming machine, it cannot be said to also be located outside of the top box.

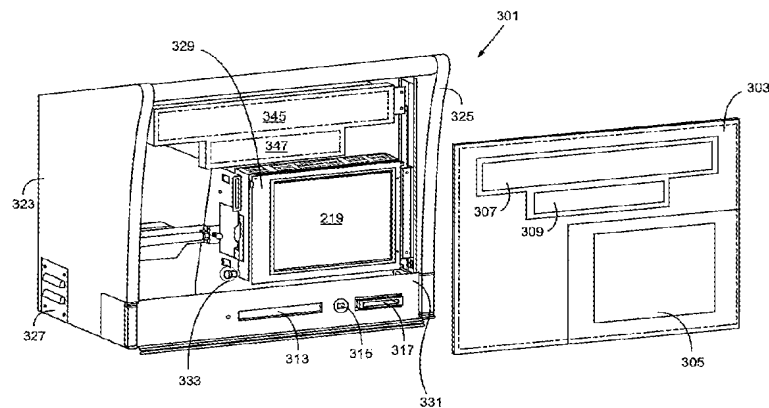


Figure 3d

Applicants note that the Office Action implies that display module 329 is located outside of both the main cabinet and the top box in the rejection of claim 4: “...Mastera discloses [a] ... universal gaming engine [that] is interposed between said main cabinet and said top box, and said [top box] and said universal gaming engine are adapted to detach from said main cabinet as a combined unit (fig. 3 and 4).” (Office Action, page 3, lines 11-14). Applicants note that, at the

least, Mastera does *not* disclose the “interposed” aspect of Applicants’ claim language. The Mastera display module 329 is depicted within the top box, not “interposed” between the top box and the main cabinet.

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited sections of Mastera do not disclose all elements of Applicants’ amended claim 1. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

Amended claims 23, 33, and 38 recite similar features to those recited in amended claim 1 and are respectfully submitted to be patentable over the cited art for at least the reasons given above in support of claim 1. Amended claim 22 recites features similar to those recited in the above-mentioned claims, but uses slightly different terminology. Amended claim 22 is also respectfully submitted to be patentable over the cited art for similar reasons. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejections of claims 22, 23, 33, and 38 be withdrawn.

Not All Elements Addressed

Applicants note that independent claim 23 includes elements such as a computer server, data regarding modular universal gaming engines, and data regarding top boxes; such elements (or their pre-amendment equivalents) did not appear to be addressed in the rejection of claim 23.

35 U.S.C. §102(b) Rejections of Claims 19 and 20

Claims 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Figs. 3, 4, 5, and 6 of Mastera and “netplex and serial connection”. (Office Action, page 5, lines 11-17). Claim 19 recites “...a standardized layout of physical connections that is consistent across a plurality of other universal gaming engines.” Claim 20 recites “...said standardized layout of physical connections compris[ing] a grid of ported connections.”

Applicants note that the cited sections of Mastera fail to disclose the elements recited above. While Mastera does depict physical connections 341 in Fig. 3e, there does not appear to be an indication that these connections are in a *standardized layout that is consistent across a plurality of other universal gaming engines*. There also does not appear to be any indication that the layout depicted is “a grid of ported connections” as recited in claim 20. The mention of “netplex and serial connection” appears to refer to standardized communications protocols, but there is no indication in Mastera that the physical connections for implementing these protocols are implemented in a standardized layout that is consistent across a plurality of other universal gaming engines, nor as a grid of ported connections.

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited sections of Mastera fail to teach all elements of claims 19 and 20. Applicants therefore respectfully request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejections of claims 19 and 20.

35 U.S.C. §102(b) and 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejections of Dependent Claims

The dependent claims include all of the features of the independent claims on which they are based and, therefore, are patentable for at least the reasons discussed above. Furthermore, as mentioned above, there are at least additional deficiencies in the prior art that Applicants believe leave the dependent claims allowable over the cited art. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejections to the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

For the above reasons, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this application are in condition for allowance. Applicants therefore respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. Should the Examiner believe a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this Application, please contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Applicants hereby petition for any additional extension of time that may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee for such extension or any further fee required in connection with the filing of this amendment is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 504480 (Order No. IGT1P104).

Respectfully submitted,
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